

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 and 15 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Aime (U.S. Patent No. 6,467,138). Claims 1-10, 12-15 were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipate by Corbett et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,266,857). Claims 13 and 14 were objected to as being allowable. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejected claims 1-12 and 15, including independent claim 1.

Claim 1 recites an electrically conductive acoustic matching layer with an aligned conductor in the matching layer. Aime and Corbett et al. do not disclose these limitations.

Aime is for a backing (title). Transducers operate in a forward direction to enhance sound propagation on one side and minimize sound propagation on an opposite side with backing material (Col. 1, lines 57-65). The embodiments of Aime are particularly concerned with the backing block or sound absorbing material (Col. 2, lines 54-56). Matching layers acoustically match the transducer to tissue and are on a side opposite the backing (Col. 5, lines 29-44). Aime provide conductors in the backing block, not the matching layers.

Corbett et al. also disclose a backing structure (title). The backing is acoustically absorbent (Col. 4, lines 19-32). The backing includes conductors in vias (Col. 4, lines 33-51). The matching layer is on an opposite side of the transducer from the backing (Col. 5, lines 1-6). Corbett et al. provide conductors in a backing material, not matching layers.

Dependent claims 2-12 and 15 depend on claim 1, so are allowable for the same reasons. Further limitations are allowable over Aime and Corbett et al. For example, claim 12 recites a conductor between separate volumes of solid matching layer material. Corbett et al. use a single volume with vias, and Aime cast a single volume around conductors.

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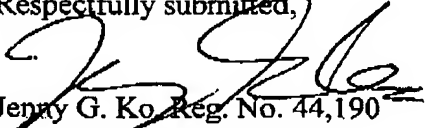
CONCLUSION:

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seeks early allowance thereof. If for any reason, the Examiner is unable to allow the application but believes that an interview would be helpful to resolve any issues, he is respectfully requested to call the undersigned at (650) 694-5810 or Craig Summerfield at (312) 321-4726.

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